

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 200825Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1260

INFO COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMIPAC HONOLULU

S E C R E T SAIGON 15659

EXDIS

SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR MILITARY ADDRESSEES

FOL SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM DANANG 19 DEC 74:

QUOTE

S E C R E T DANANG 0733

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, VS

SUBJECT: MILITAGP SITUATION IN MR-1

REF: DANANG 0731

1. DEC 18 DISCUSSED MILITARY SITUATION IN MR-1 WITH COMMODORE
HO VAN KY THOAI.

2. I ASKED THOAI ABOUT RESUPPLY BY WATER OF VC UNITS OPERATING
IN THE BATANGAN PENINSULA AREA OF BINH SON DISTRICT IN QUANG
NGAI. THOAI SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN TWO SEPARATE RECENT REPORTS
THAT SOME SUPPLIES WERE COMING INTO THAT AREA BY SEA. HE IS
ATTEMPTING TO BLOCKADE THE AREA BUT ROUGH SEAS ARE KEEPING HIS
SMALLER CRAFT FROM PUTTING OUT. HIS LARGER SHIPS CAN OPERATE
IN THE AREA BUT ARE INEFFECTIVE IN STOPPING SMALL SAMPANS. HE

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IS AWARE OF ARVN 2ND DIVISION OPERATIONS IN THE AREA (REFTEL) AND

IS TRYING HIS BEST TO SUPPORT THEM.

3. IN THIS CONNECTION THOAI SAID THAT HIS NAVAL UNITS HAD NOT HEARD OF ANY MORE SUBMARINE REPORTS IN THE AREA BUT ON DEC 14 HAD ESCORTED A RUSSIAN SHIP THROUGH THE AREA. WHEN IT WAS FIRST SIGHTED BY VNN CRAFT OFF OF QUANG NGAI IT WAS REPORTED THAT IT HAD ITS SHIPBOARD CRANE BOOMS OUT OVER THE SIDE AS THOUGH IT HAD JUST (OR WAS ABOUT TO) ENGAGED IN OFF-LOADING SOMETHING. THOAI QUICKLY POINTED OUT THAT GIVEN THE ROUGH STATE OF THE SEA AT THAT TIME HE DID NOT THINK THE SHIP HAD BEEN SO ENGAGED.

4. THOAI SAID THAT AN RVNAF TEAM WAS COMING TO MR-1 FROM SAIGON TO LOOK AT TAN MY CHANNEL AGAIN. SOME MEMBERS OF THE TEAM ARE ALREADY IN DANANG AND THE REST ARE DUE SOON. THE TEAM IS TO MAKE SOUNDINGS OF THE CHANNEL. THOAI SAID THAT I CORPS COMMANDER LTG NGO QUANG TRUONG CONTINUES TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF RESUPPLY OPERATIONS THROUGH TAN MY IN THE EVENT OF AN ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE. (THE BUOYS WHICH WERE EARLIER IN AT TAN MY WERE NOT THERE LAST TIME I WAS UP THAT WAY.)

5. THOAI ALSO SAID THAT HIS STAFF WAS WORKING ON A PLAN TO PROVIDE VNN PROTECTION OF WATER RESUPPLY THROUGH TAN MY IN EVENT NORTH VIETNAMESE AIR, GROUND OR NAVAL FORCES ATTEMPT TO INTERDICT IT. HE IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED LEST A SHIP IS ACTUALLY SUNK IN THE CHANNEL. GIVEN THE PROBLEMS ALREADY FACING THE USE OF THE PORT IT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CLOSE IT IF SUNK IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

6. THOAI HAS ALSO BEEN LOOKING INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF RESUPPLY OPERATIONS ACROSS THE BEACH NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS IN CASE OF A FULL OFFENSIVE. APPARENTLY THE OUTLOOK IS NOT VERY ENCOURAGING. ONE SITE JUST NORTH OF THE PASS (BUT SOUTH OF PHU LOC) HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WHERE LSTS MIGHT UNLOAD IF A 700-FOOT RAMP WERE PUT IN FROM THE BEACH TO WATER DEEP ENOUGH FOR AN LST. HEAVY SEAS WILL FURTHER RESTRICT THIS TYPE OF OPERATION. FRANCIS UNQTE MARTIN

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NNN

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